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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4197
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/USFJ PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 7757
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 1437
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3297
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2295
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9313
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 9776
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - RUSSIAN POLITICS AND
MAJOR EARTHQUAKE IN CHINA

¶1. LEAD STORIES: All Tuesday morning papers gave top coverage to Monday's devastating earthquake in central China.

¶2. "Hardliners Maintaining Influence" A Moscow correspondent for the business-oriented Nikkei wrote (5/13): "The cabinet and other key portfolio appointments in the Russian government made on Monday illustrate that hardliners in the so-called siloviki - the networks of former and current state-security officers with ties to the Soviet-era KGB and its successor agencies - will keep their strong clout. President Medvedev is positive about a market economy and democratization. However, given that the hardliners, who took the lead in state control of businesses and media, retain key government posts, it will likely be difficult for Medvedev to exercise leadership."

¶3. "China May Seek International Assistance" The conservative Sankei reported from Beijing (5/13): "The Hu government has done its utmost to rescue earthquake victims by mobilizing the PLA. Chances are high that it will request international relief assistance.... In view of the continued friction with the international community over the unrest in Tibet, the Chinese government may aim to repair its relations with the international community by accepting international assistance."

¶4. "Paramount Challenge Ahead of Olympics" A Beijing-based reporter for the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri noted (5/13): "Monday's massive earthquake poses an enormous challenge for the communist government in Beijing, which has been doing its utmost to ensure social stability ahead of the Olympics. The

government has been taking steps to minimize the damage and tamp down people's anxieties.... With Chinese society facing such destabilizing developments as Tibet, astounding income gaps, employment uncertainty, and corruption, discontent is simmering among the hundreds of millions of its poor citizens. The Hu administration clearly recognizes mishandling the quake response could light a dangerous fire."

DONOVAN